

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 001074

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH DEFENSE

MINISTER-DESIGNATE JOSE BONO

REF: MADRID 1052

Classified By: Political Counselor Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick,
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary: Ambassador met March 30 with Socialist defense minister-designate Jose Bono. The meeting was very pleasant and friendly, and Bono pledged to do his part to continue the fine relations the U.S. and Spain have developed over the years. He characterized himself as a "moderate socialist" and said he was a friend of the United States. Bono will be in the U.S. April 2-6 and requested a meeting with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to discuss Iraq. End summary.

Friend of the United States

2. (C) Ambassador met with Bono in Toledo, the capital of the Castilla-La Mancha region, where Bono has been the very popular president for over 20 years. (See reftel for bio on Bono). Defense Attache and Pol-miloff joined Ambassador -- Bono was not joined by any staff in the meeting. Bono started off by saying he was a "moderate socialist" who considers Spain to be a close friend and ally of the U.S. He was anxious to reinforce the great relationship the two countries have, and predicted he along with the rest of the Zapatero administration would be in office by April 19. Bono commented that he was a friend of the U.S. and added, chuckling, that he is one of the few Spanish politicians who can say he has never taken a position counter to the U.S. He recalled that he has twice traveled to the U.S. at USG invitation on visitor programs and had excellent experiences both times. Ambassador assured Bono the U.S. was also looking forward to continuing the fine relations the U.S. and Spain have developed.

Relationship Based on Trust and Friendship

3. (C) Bono said as far as he is concerned, Spain's relations with the U.S. are based on two firm pillars -- confidence and friendship. That's how he views the relationship and he plans to continue the relationship that way. He noted that in the early 80s when Spain and the U.S. were reviewing the status of the bases in Spain, many on the U.S. side were worried the Socialists would be very hard to work with. On the contrary, both sides worked together very well and reached an excellent agreement for both parties. He said he was sure the U.S. and Spain would continue to work well together on all issues.

4. (C) On the other hand, Bono said it was not good for Spain to feel as though it is in a position of submission to anyone, as that hurts national pride. "A very proud country like the U.S. could certainly understand that," he added. But he was confident the U.S. and Spain would continue the excellent relationship they have had for years, and Bono looked forward to working with us to that end.

Requests Meeting with Sec. Rumsfeld on Iraq

5. (C) On Iraq, Bono said he would very much like to speak directly to Secretary Rumsfeld. Bono will be in New York City April 2-6 and wondered if it might be possible to arrange a meeting in that time frame -- Bono would be willing to travel to D.C. to meet with Secretary Rumsfeld. If a personal meeting is not possible, Bono is very interested in talking Rumsfeld by phone as soon as possible. He would like to do so before he meets with the Polish defense minister April 8 and the British defense minister April 12. Pol-miloff asked Bono if he might give us a preview of what he planned to tell Rumsfeld about Iraq. Bono replied that unfortunately he was limited in what he could say at this point and Zapatero had specifically asked him only to speak to Rumsfeld about the issue, so he wasn't able to elaborate at this time, though he wished he could.

Comment

16. (C) Jose Bono is one of the stars of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero's emerging cabinet. Long a very popular luminary of the Socialist Party, Bono is very polished and, as he said, has rarely criticized the United States openly. Bono will likely do what he can to keep Spain/U.S. military relations on track, but it remains to be seen how much latitude Zapatero will give him. Given that Bono is a Socialist Party heavyweight, Zapatero may give him more leeway than he gives other members of his administration. We recommend that if Bono comes to Washington to meet with Secretary Rumsfeld, the Department also seek to arrange a meeting between Bono and Deputy Secretary Armitage.

ARGYROS